In 2001-02, to clear the backlog of replacement of such identified bridges on Indian Railways, 2700 bridges were sanctioned for repair/rehabilitation/ rebuilding at a cost of Rs. 1530 crore (net) under Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSF) to be completed in a span of 5 years *i.e.* from 2001-02 to 2006-07. Apart from SRSF, additional funds are also made available annualy to take up the repair/rehabilitation of fresh accruals of bridge works under Depreciation Reserve Fund (DRF). Year-wise repair, rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges identified after creation of SRSF during the last 4 years is given as below:—

Year	SRSF		DRF	
	Bridges Repaired/ Rehabilitated	Expenditure (in Cr.)	Bridges Repaired/ Rehabilitated(in Cr.)	Expenditure
2001-02	280	44.0	445	64.0
2002-03	496	152.0	655	48.0
2003-04	530	157.0	1033	71.0
2004-05	411 (Target)	149.0 (Till Dec. 04)	1218 (Target)	65.0 (Till Dec.04)

As on 01.04.2004, a total of 4886 bridges exist on various Zonal Railway, which had been sanctioned under SRSF & DRF and were yet to be rehabilitated. Out of these, 1629 bridges are targeted to be completed in 2004-05. In the year 2004-05, a total of Rs. 610 crore (Rs. 510 crore under SRSF & 100 crore under DRF & others) have been allotted in the budget estimate for rebuilding/repair/rehabilitation of bridges and total of 1179 bridges have been rebuilt/rehabilitated under SRSF & DRF upto 31.01.2005.

Competitiveness of Indian Railways

591. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the present scenario of global trade, it is needed to make the Railways competitive;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that despite being one of the biggest Railways of the world, Indian Railways is more expensive than those of America and China; and

(d) if so, the facts in this regard and Government's plan to make Indian Railways competitive at international level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Railways continue to strive for excellence as a principle mode of transportation of goods and passenger. Various initiatives have been taken to make the Railways competitive by way of improved productivity, induction of new technology, managerial and marketing efforts.

(c) and (d) Each railway system has its own structure (Government or Private ownership), clientele (passenger or freight) and support systems. There is no single, common defined parameter for judging the competitiveness across different railways systems in the world.

Private investment in Railways

592. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways propose to revise siding rules to encourage private investment in construction, up gradation and its efficient utilization;

(b) if so, whether a Task Force has been set up for the purpose;

(c) whether it has submitted the report; and

(d) if so, the salient recommendations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.